



DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Washington, D.C. 20520

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4/29/82

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September 7,

Dear Dr. Falk:

Thank you for sending along the materials on the human rights situation in Tunisia with your letter of August 29, 1977. A check with the Bureau of Near East and South Asian Affairs reveals that they do not have in their files a letter from the wives of the imprisoned men dated April 28 to President Carter. Ordinarily such letters, transmitted to the White House by regular mail, are referred in the first instance to the appropriate Bureau of the State Department for preparation of a suitable reply. If you could give my staff any further information on how this letter was sent and approximately when, we might be able to see whether it was ever actually received. I note however that the trial is now over so that many of the specific questions which the letter addresses are no longer relevant. Still, it would be good to know what became of the letter. You could contact Ellis O. Jones at (202) 632-2741 if you have further information.

I have reread your New York Times piece with even greater interest than when it first came out now in the light of the extensive research discussion of the incidents of last spring, which you enclosed. Incidentally the authorship of that piece does not appear on the copy you enclosed. In any event I am much struck with your point that "a human rights perspective must emphasize positive possibilities for democratic rule as well as contend against the worst excesses of antidemocratic rule." It seems to me

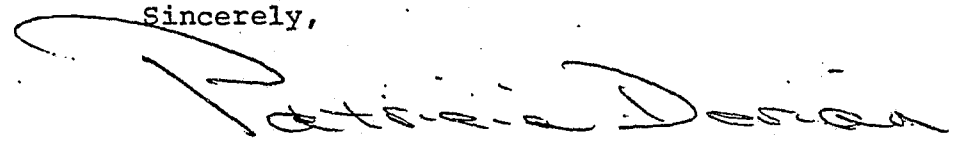
Professor Richard Falk,
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Corwin Hall,
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that this remark is applicable beyond the confines of the Tunisian case. Rather than comment in detail on this and the other important points you make, at this point, I am sending along your letter and its enclosures together with a copy of this letter to Ambassador Mulcahy with a note that he may wish to comment, either directly to you or to me. I would like to continue this dialogue after he has had a chance to give us his thoughts.

Incidentally, we noted that a "Swiss human rights group" is reported by Reuters on September 1 as having alleged many instances of torture by the Tunisian Government in connection with this trial. We have not yet been able to discover the source of this report. Do you have any more precise information?

Sincerely,



Patricia M. Derian
Assistant Secretary for
Human Rights and
Humanitarian Affairs